

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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USEEC

GENEVA FOR USDEL MTN

LONDON OR COPENHAGEN PASS AMBASSADOR STRAUSS AND PARTY

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EEC, MTN, GATT
SUBJ: EC FOREIGN MINISTERS COUNCIL, APRIL 4, 1978: MTN

1. APRIL 4 EC FOREIGN MINISTERS COUNCIL AGREED THAT
COMMUNITY NEGOTIATORS IN GENEVA SHOULD CONCENTRATE
DURING NEXT IMMEDIATE PHASE OF MTN IN SEEKING IMPROVEMENT
IN OFFERS OF MAIN NEGOTIATING PARTNERS, INCLUDING US AND
JAPAN. THE COUNCIL AUTHORIZED THE COMMISSION TO DEVELOP
LISTS OF WITHDRAWALS FROM THE EC OFFER, WHICH MIGHT BE
PUT FORWARD LATER IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. COUNCIL,
COMMISSION AND PERMREP SOURCES EMPHASIZE THAT, ALTHOUGH
COMMISSION NEGOTIATORS HAVE BEEN GIVEN FLEXIBILITY IN
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DETERMINING THE APPROPRIATE MOMENT FOR TABLING LISTS OF
WITHDRAWALS, THEY ARE NOT COMMITTED TO DO SO, AND ANY
FINAL DECISION MUST, IN ANY CASE, BE TAKEN IN CONSULTA-
TION WITH THE EC MEMBER STATES IN THE ARTICLE 113
COMMITTEE.

2. SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER THE MEETING, UK TRADE

MINISTER EDMUND DELL SAID THAT THE MAIN PROBLEM FOR THE COMMUNITY IS HOW TO GET IMPROVED OFFERS FROM THE U.S. AND JAPAN. HE CRITICIZED THE "HIGH PEAK TARIFFS", NOTABLY ON WOOLEN TEXTILES, RETAINED IN THE U.S. OFFER, AND ASSERTED THAT THE JAPANESE OFFER "FALLS FAR SHORT OF ANYTHING NEAR LIKELY TO BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE COMMUNITY." DELL CHARACTERIZED THE POSSIBLE EC WITHDRAWAL LIST AS A TACTICAL "NEGOTIATING WEAPON" BUT ADDED HIS PERSONAL VIEW THAT IT WOULD EVENTUALLY BE PUT FORWARD. ALTHOUGH DELL SPOKE ONLY IN TERMS OF A SINGLE LIST, FRENCH REPORTERS WERE TOLD BY GOF SPOKESMEN THAT THREE LISTS WERE CONSIDERED DURING THE ARTICLE 113 MEETING HELD THE MORNING OF THE APRIL 4 COUNCIL. THE FIRST OF THESE LISTS REPORTEDLY INVOLVES THE OVERALL EC OFFER, WHILE A SECOND IS AIMED AT THE U.S. (PRINCIPALLY ON TEXTILES), AND A THIRD AT JAPAN (INCLUDING AUTOMOBILES). OUR FRENCH SOURCES SAY THE LAST TWO LISTS ARE NOW LARGELY "A GLEAM IN THE EYE" OF COMMISSION DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS SIR ROY DENMAN, AND WOULD BE INTRODUCED ONLY IF THE U.S. AND JAPAN FAIL TO MAKE SATISFACTORY IMPROVEMENTS (ONE SOURCE SAID THE THIRD LIST WOULD ALSO BE TIED TO A SATISFACTORY JAPANESE RESPONSE ON THE SELECTIVE SAFEGUARDS CLAUSE).

3. THERE WERE NO INDICATIONS AFTER THE COUNCIL MEETING AS TO THE SCOPE OF THE POSSIBLE EC WITHDRAWALS. HOWEVER, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AT A PRE-COUNCIL BACKGROUND PRESS BRIEFING, UK PERMREP SIR DONALD MAITLAND SAID THAT THE PROBABLE EFFECT OF SUCH EC ACTION WOULD BE TO LOWER THE ORIGINAL EC OFFER TO 33 PERCENT ACROSS THE BOARD AND 31.5 PERCENT FOR THE U.S. (MAITLAND WAS REFERRING TO ONLY A SINGLE LIST, AND NOT POSSIBLE SUPPLEMENTARY LISTS FOR THE U.S. AND JAPAN). EMPHASIZING EC DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE U.S. AND JAPANESE OFFERS, MAITLAND SAID THE EC NOW HAS TWO TACTICAL CHOICES: (1) HOLD OFF DOING ANYTHING PROVOCATIVE AND HOPE THE U.S. AND JAPAN WILL RECOGNIZE THAT EC PATIENCE IS NOT UNLIMITED; OR (2) TABLE ITS OWN LIST OF WITHDRAWALS. MAITLAND SAID THAT, IF THE EC WERE TO CHOOSE THE SECOND OPTION, THE U.K. WOULD FAVOR TABLING A LIST IMMEDIATELY RATHER THAN THREATENING TO DO SO AT A LATER STAGE IN NEGOTIATIONS, A COURSE HE SAID WOULD BE POTENTIALLY DISRUPTIVE.

4. DISCUSSION AT BREAKFAST MORNING APRIL 5 WITH CONGRESSMEN VANIK AND STEIGER, HAFERKAMP AND DENMAN EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH OUTCOME OF COUNCIL DISCUSSION ON MTN, SAYING THAT EMPHASIS HAD BEEN ON IMPROVEMENT OF TARIFF OFFERS OF OTHERS AND THAT COMMISSION HAD RETAINED

FULL FLEXIBILITY IN THE CONDUCT OF THE NEGOTIATION.
MORRIS

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